

Exiles Hail Castro's Sister As 'Angel' Of Underground

By MARY LOUISE WILKINSON
Reporter of The Miami News

The defection to Mexico of Fidel Castro's sister, Juanita, came as no surprise to exile leaders here. They say she has been working actively against her brother for the past four years.

In an emotion-packed Mexican television appearance last night, the 31-year-old woman tearfully read a six-page denouncement of the Cuban Communist regime headed by her two brothers whom she accused of selling out the island to Russia.

"I've been expecting Juanita's defection for months,"



DR. LUIS AGUERO
Expected Her Defection

said Dr. Luis Conte Aguero. "She has actively helped hundreds of people escape the island."

With breaking voice, Juanita Castro charged the people of Cuba had been "nailed to a cross of torment by international communism."

Although she refused to say how she reached Mexico City from Cuba, exiles here surmise it was by one of Cubana Airlines' weekly flights. She is known to have carried a diplomatic passport and to have made numerous trips there to see her sister Emma, married to a Mexican citizen.

Conte Aguero said that on Feb. 24, 1960, Juanita made an openly anti-Communist speech at a hospital inauguration at

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Central Marcane sugar mill, Oriente Province.

"She was a marked woman from then on. In spite of that, she and Emma loaned me their car to go to CMQ radio station a month later, knowing I planned to denounce Communist infiltration in the Castro regime."

Miss Castro, one of seven brothers and sisters, declared in her Mexico appearance she had originally actively supported her brother's revolution against ex-dictator Fulgencio Batista.

During Castro's battle for power in 1957-58, Miss Castro sneaked across the border from Mexico to Brownsville, Texas, and traveled to Miami by bus and plane, asking U. S. haven.

She appeared at a local Cuban theater on Flagler Street, seeking to gain arms and funds to help her brother.

"After she broke with her brothers' ideology, her house in Havana became a haven for the

anti-Castro underground," said an exile leader.

"She is known to have accompanied people to the airport, using her name to get them safely out of the island," he said. "She also saw that others got into embassies and acquired medicine and food for prisoners."

In last night's denunciation of her brother, Miss Castro said there were 75,000 political prisoners in Cuba and said the island is "an enormous prison surrounded by water."

Deteriorating conditions in the last few months finally forced her to flee, she said.

However, Dr. Armāndo Fleites — No. 2 man of the Second Front of the Escambray which once fought with Castro — said here she "apparently stayed as long as she could help the anti-Castro underground."